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ABSTRACT

The redesigning effort at the College of Education at the University of Maine at Orono, now in the second year of its implementation, stresses collaboration with those involved in education including university faculty, former students, public school teachers, and administrators. Decisions about what students at the College of Education should observe and do in the public schools for their preparation are made jointly by college faculty and area school teachers. On-campus course content is decided in the same manner; decisions are arrived at by consensus and no power hierarchy exists. A description is given of how representatives of the university faculty and the public sector are recruited, how they communicate with each other, and how a representative team of planners with the overall responsibility for leading the planning is established. In the implementation of the redesign, collaboration has become even more important as evidenced by public school teachers and college faculty involved in implementing the planned changes and educating preservice teachers. The organization unit for collaboration is a team composed of one university teacher educator, a graduate student, school representatives from each school in a district, and twenty freshman education majors. The current functioning of the collaboration and anticipated future developments are discussed. (JD)

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The Collaborative Effort of Redesign in Teacher Education

The Planning and Implementation Process

by C. Perry, J. Kristo, and J. Rog

If one were to turn the pages of a photo album depicting the last twenty years of undergraduate teacher preparation in the College of Education at the University of Maine at Orono, one would see a changing case of players and a few changes of scenery against a backdrop which has remained quite constant. Three years ago, however, a new album was created which would tell the story of a unique teacher preparation program in the College of Education.

The redesign is now in its second year of implementation. The planning and implementation of the redesign is a true collaboration with those involved in education; from other university faculty and former students, to public school teachers and administrators. All involved in the planning made decisions as to the design of the new program, and as the redesign evolves the partnership of UMO's College of Education with area schools is continuing. Decisions about what students in the College of Education should observe and do in the public schools for their preparation were and are made jointly by college faculty and area school teachers. On-campus course content is decided in the same manner. Decisions are arrived at by consensus and no power hierarchy exists. This paper describes the planning and implementation of the redesign stressing the collaborative process.

Planning

The first major effort toward our redesign was the development of an effective approach to planning. From the beginning, the effort was to

collaborate with colleagues in the university, public schools and members of the State Department of Educational and Cultural Services.

The planning approach developed had three major objectives:

Objective 1. To include the participation of university faculty and the public sector in the planning process for the preparation of teachers.

In order to insure that the appropriate groups were provided the opportunity to be involved with the redesign effort a list of prospective groups was developed. Surveys (see Figure 1) were sent to graduates of the current program, present students, practicing teachers, administrators, high school students and parents. In addition to the survey, meetings were held with personnel at 24 schools in the immediate region. From these surveys and meetings we were able to identify qualified persons interested in planning the redesign of the teacher preparation program and start the list of experiences an undergraduate teacher preparation program should include. The results of the survey are summarized in the section entitled "Attitudes of Personnel" in Figure 2.

University of Maine at Orono

College of Education

SURVEY FORM

Position in school system _____ If you teach, grade/s taught _____

Subject/subject areas taught _____ Years of teaching experience _____

Are you currently enrolled in a degree program? _____

	Bachelor's Degree	Masters Degree	C.A.S.	Doctorate
UMO	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other college in Maine	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other type of college/university out of state	_____	_____	_____	_____

KEY: Strongly Agree 1 | Agree 2 | No Opinion 3 | Disagree 4 | Strongly Disagree 5

1. Teacher training procedures need to be redesigned for the 1980's and 90's. 1 2 3 4 4

2. Teachers need to acquire new skills and techniques to be effective in the 1980's and 90's. 1 2 3 4 5

3. Teacher preparation programs need to prepare a person as a specialist in the learning and teaching process. 1 2 3 4 5

4. Teacher preparation programs need to prepare a person with a strong liberal arts background. 1 2 3 4 5

5. Teacher preparation programs provide enough field based experiences. 1 2 3 4 5

6. Teachers in the field have a responsibility to provide input into the undergraduate preparation of teachers. 1 2 3 4 5

7. List the preservice education experiences that have been most helpful in your teaching. _____

_____

_____

8. List the preservice education experiences that have been least helpful in your teaching. _____

_____

_____

9. Ways that teachers in the field might assist in the undergraduate preparation of teachers are: _____

Figure 1

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Developed by:
Robert A. Cobb
Dean, College of Education
University of Maine at Orono

Objective 2. To establish a vehicle for communicating the progress of the redesign.

In early summer 1981 the first newsletter was published. This was followed by a series of newsletters published once a month. It gave increased visibility to our efforts, provided recognition for persons who were involved and created an important sense of reality to the redesign. Figure 2 includes sample articles from the first newsletter. Newsletters were sent to all College of Education faculty, the Planning Leadership Team, College of Educations, deans across the country, the Maine Department of Education, area schools and anyone else requesting to be on the mailing list.

Attitudes of School Personnel

By Robert J. Drummond, Coordinator Field Research

A sample of 717 public school personnel from twenty different unions, school administrative districts or individual units, were surveyed by the College of Education in its planning process this spring. The respondents were primarily teachers (88%). The second largest group were principals.

Fifty-four percent were UMO graduates, 28 percent graduates of other institutions of higher education in Maine and 18 percent were graduates of colleges or universities out of state.

Ninety-one percent of the sample agreed to some extent that teacher training procedures need to be redesigned for the 1980's and 1990's. Only two percent disagreed. Six had no opinion.

Eighty-six percent felt that teachers need to acquire new skills and techniques to be effective in the 1980's and 1990's. Eight percent were unsure and six percent disagreed.

Seventy-eight percent agreed that teacher preparation programs need to prepare a person as a specialist in the learning and teaching process. Ten percent disagreed and eleven percent were unsure.

Fifty-seven percent of the sample concurred with the statement that teacher preparation programs need to prepare a person with a strong liberal arts background. Nineteen percent disagreed and twenty-four percent had no opinion.

Only thirteen percent agreed that teacher preparation programs provided enough field-based experiences. Eighty-one percent disagreed while seven percent had no opinion.

Eighty-five percent felt that teachers in the field have a responsibility to provide input into the undergraduate preparation of teachers. Five percent disagreed and ten percent had no opinion.

Least Helpful Experiences

The educators were asked to list the pre-service experiences that had been least helpful in their teaching. The majority of responses fell into the curriculum category. The most negative item was methods courses.

A second major category identified was the professor and his teaching. Lecture courses were viewed negatively by some. Teachers did not like to be taught by college teachers who never taught outside the college level or by unmotivated, uninteresting ones.

The third category was field experiences. This category had the fewest negative responses.

Most Helpful Experiences

The experiences having the most positive impact on teachers were the field experiences. About sixty percent of the respondents included some positive comment dealing with their student teaching experience. Practicum and field experiences involving work with children, schools, and the curriculum were listed by 15 percent of the sample.

The second category receiving the most comments was curriculum experiences. A large number of courses were listed as being beneficial. Methods courses received the most nominations. Work experiences and experiences with youth were also formative experiences.

Input of Teachers to Undergraduate Preparation of Teachers

In general, the sample surveyed wants to be more involved in the design and implementation of the teacher education program. The involvement ranges from willingness to allow students to observe in their classrooms to supervising student teaching, from instructing small groups of students in teacher education to teaching methods courses.

College of Education Program To Change for 1980s and 1990s

Dean Robert Cobb has announced that a College of Education Planning Leadership Team has been appointed by the College's Management Team. This summer the Planning Leadership Team will develop and publish a list of principles/assumptions constituting the basis for re-structuring the teacher preparation program.

The Dean actively solicited nominations from the College faculty, faculty from related disciplines at UMO, the Department of Educational and Cultural Services and the public schools. The criteria for selection to the Planning Leadership Team were: geographic distribution, grade level taught, years of teaching experience, demonstrated leadership ability and diversity in educational preparation.

This summer the team will obtain and review other developing teacher education models. They will solicit a wide range of viewpoints via journals, reports, interviews, consultants, etc. and draw upon recognized projections and predictions regarding the next two decades.

After producing the document containing planning principles, assumptions, "caveats," the Planning Leadership Team will seek reactions and evaluations from constituent groups regarding the planning principles/assumptions. The team will then formulate a skeletal overview or structure for preparing future teachers; they will seek reactions from constituent groups regarding the proposed skeletal structure, identify specific planning tasks and

Figure 2

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Objective 3. To establish a representative team of planners which would accept overall responsibility for leading the planning effort.

By mid spring 1981 a Planning Leadership Team (PLT) was appointed by the Dean of the College of Education. It consisted of faculty from the Colleges of Education, Arts and Sciences and Life Sciences and Agriculture, public school teachers representing various grade levels and content areas, a superintendent, principals and members of the State Department of Educational and Cultural Services.

The team's responsibilities were to:

1. Create a knowledge base by:
   a. Reviewing and evaluating findings from recent research in teacher education and teacher education programs around the country. To accomplish this responsibility all team members read and reacted to articles in top journal in the field of teacher education.
   b. Consulting the surveys.
   c. Holding a series of hearings and interviews. Testimony was gathered from members of:
      1. Educational Committee of the State Legislature
      2. Commissioner of Education
      3. Maine Teachers' Association
      4. Maine School Management
      5. Deans for the Colleges of Engineering, Arts and Sciences and Life Sciences and Agriculture.

2. Identify those principal assumptions which would govern the development of plans for the redesign of undergraduate teacher education at UMO, e.g. early and intensive field component, student mentoring system, true collaboration.
3. Formulate and propose a model for the preparation of teachers.
4. Identify planning tasks and recommend the formulation of ad hoc groups to "flesh out" the details of the model.

After a thorough review of the survey, interview and testimony data and a review of major findings of national studies, it was decided that five areas of greatest significance (liberal arts, human development, evaluation, field experiences and instructional skills) were to serve as the foundation of the redesign. The PLT established five ad hoc committees to do indepth studies and make specific programmatic and process recommendations to the PLT. These committees represented teachers, administrators, College of Education faculty and faculty from other colleges in the University. The ad hoc committees, as was the PLT, used a collaborative decision-making process. They worked through the winter and spring of 1982 reporting back to the PLT in early summer.

A series of summer meetings of the PLT culminated with a one day session in which all the major components were pulled together and a plan for the redesign was, for the first time, a reality. Several editorial meetings followed and in late summer 1982 a written document entitled the "Planning Leadership Team report" (PLT Report) was published and distributed.

Figure 3 is a schema of the process followed by the Planning Leadership Team.

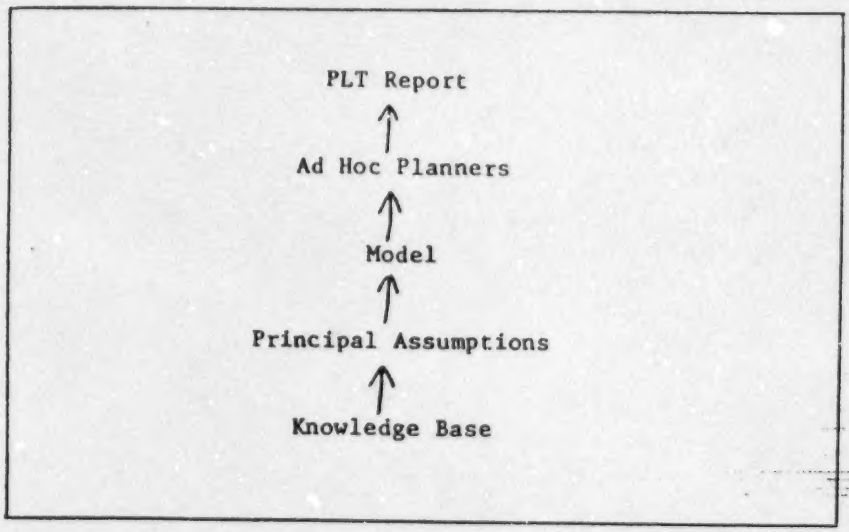
PLT Report
Ad Hoc Planners
Model
Principal Assumptions
Knowledge Base

Figure 3

Implementation

In the implementation of the redesign, collaboration has become even more important as evidenced by public school teachers and college faculty involved in implementing decisions and educating preservice teachers. The organizational unit for collaboration is the Professional Preparation Team (PPT). The team is composed of one university teacher educator, a graduate student, school representatives from each school in a district and twenty freshmen. The composition of the team changes each year as students are added to the team.

During the summer of 1983 the University of Maine teacher educator, graduate student, and teacher representatives met to design the first semester of the new program. The PLT report was used as a guide in helping the team to design goals, objectives, and the scheduling of field experiences and on campus seminars.

The team spent approximately fifty hours in preparation for the fall. The unique aspect of these working sessions was the collaborative effort by everyone. The teacher educator worked with the school representatives from day one of the working sessions. The goal of the collaborative approach was to work with public school teachers in the formulation of curricula, thus placing teachers in a proactive stance. This is radically different from the reactive posture frequently assigned to the public school staff. The college recognized the importance of teacher input in the implementation as well as the design of the program. However, in order to take this charge seriously it was necessary for the university faculty member (teacher educator) to adapt an administrative role that would allow for joint ownership of the new program. It would not be acceptable for the teacher educator to make programmatic decisions independent of the group. The teacher educator

chaired the summer work sessions and initiated brain-storming sessions, but was not the problem solver for the group. Instead, problems were solved together.

As new teams develop and gain from our experience they may vary the operational style according to the composition of the team. However, one cannot help believing, even at this early date, that a collaborative approach will lead to more program investment on the part of teacher representatives and the school district. The teacher representatives felt that they were making positive contributions. They found it extremely satisfying to be able to share their ideas on how prospective teachers should be educated and to have these ideas incorporated into the planning by the College of Education.

In addition to collaboration within the PPT's, school districts and the College of Education have worked out a system whereby school districts provide released time for their PPT members and in return the College of Education provides money for staff development to benefit not only PPT members but also other teachers in the school districts. Decisions as to how monies are to be spent are made collaboratively by the PPT's.

Summary

Both the College and public schools are accepting a new role in the education of teachers for the future. The model is an evolving one in which collaborative decision-making plays a key function. The collaboration in all stages of the planning and implementation of the new undergraduate teacher preparation program at UMO requires time and is an expensive process. But it is proving to be a worthwhile effort that is resulting in the synthesis of the practical experiences of the primary and secondary education professionals and the experiences and knowledge of the university and government education professionals. New directions indicated by recent research and

reports are evident in the significant programmatic changes in the College of Education, University of Maine at Orono.